

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY  
ACADEMIC SENATE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE  
September 13, 2021

Present: D. Aubert; L. Beale; P. Beavers; J. Fitzgibbon; M. Kornbluh; C. Parrish; N. Rossi;  
B. Roth; N. Simon; R. Villarosa; A. Wisniewski

1. Approval of Proceedings.

The committee approved the proceedings of August 30 as drafted.

2. Report from the Chair.

- a. As of September 12, the compliance rate for submitting proof of vaccination or for students who are taking an online course is 91%. Ninety-six percent of faculty teaching in person have submitted proof of vaccination. The compliance rate is 85.1% for academic staff and non-academic staff who have submitted proof of vaccination or have a waiver for the semester. Fewer than 5% of the 26,640 people who submitted documents asked for a waiver. The people who have waivers are tested weekly at the Campus Health Center. Athletes and Public Safety personnel are tested daily. People who have difficulty completing the daily screener or uploading proof of vaccination or the waiver should not call the Campus Health Center and should not call to complain about the requirements but only if they are ill or want a medical appointment. If a room needs cleaning, Facilities Planning and Management can fog the room with formaldehyde if people desire.
- b. Farshad Fotouhi is stepping down from the position of Dean of Engineering. A national search for a new dean will be carried out. Kornbluh asked Policy Committee to appoint a representative to serve on the search committee.
- c. The five-year review of the Library System and the leadership of the dean are underway. The Library System includes the School of Information Sciences, the libraries, and the Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs. Kornbluh asked Policy Committee to appoint a representative to the review committee.
- d. Undergraduate enrollment is down 3.4% compared with last year mostly because the number of incoming freshmen students is down. Last year many students who would have gone to other universities in Michigan stayed close to home and took classes at WSU. The number of graduate and professional students is down significantly. This year enrollment at community colleges is up but students are taking fewer credit hours. The number of students who transferred to Wayne is stable compared with last year. The administration will put more effort to attract transfer students. Most of our transfer students come from schools with which the university has specific agreements. Kornbluh wants to expand such agreements to more schools. He is trying to increase the number of international undergraduate students and the number of students from states that border the Great Lakes who get a tuition discount (tuition is only 10% more than tuition for Michigan residents). The Provost will meet with deans and departments to identify areas where faculty think they can grow enrollment. Marketing efforts will focus more on academics. Financial aid for transfer students will be discussed. Housing will be part of the marketing strategy. The administration is

disappointed with the number of freshmen who are in the Chatsworth Apartments that were designed to promote student success by providing a unique first-year experience for students transitioning to college. Roth mentioned an experience he had with another faculty member and students visiting schools. The students demonstrated the value of the accessibility of our faculty to undergraduate students. Roth believes such visits should be part of the strategies to attract students. Kornbluh said the literature says that when students are brought to campus they are more interested. The visit makes a big difference in their impression of a university. Our efforts will focus on accessibility for students. Seeing the students and faculty are very important. Students need guidance counseling. Rossi thinks the university needs to determine which programs will be emphasized for students. Block programs should be available for students who take all their courses with other students who are pursuing the same degree. In this way students get to know other students. It works well for students in STEM programs and in large classes.

- e. Several members who were on the staff of the Office of Sponsored Program Administration have left the office. Now the processing of grant applications will take longer.
  - f. Some programs require that exams be proctored. There are three options for proctoring: Respondus, ProctorU, Zoom. The faculty member could hire someone to proctor an exam if they do not want to proctor it themselves.
3. Report from the President.
- a. A faculty member used a CO<sub>2</sub> device to check the air in his classroom. The levels were somewhat higher than what was thought to be normal last year but were within the safe level.
  - b. Last year the university gave students on Pell grants tablets to use in their online classes. Some of the students have left Wayne State but have not returned the tablets. This fall semester Computing and Information Technology said that giving students tablets was not a priority and any assigned would be given out the second week of classes. Dean of Students David Strauss intervened and the students were given the tablets at the beginning of the term.
  - c. Faculty and staff should contact Associate Vice President for Facilities Planning and Management Robert Davenport if they have specific complaints about the condition of the facilities. Everyone has to empty their trash into large containers placed in hallways. Beale noted the unsightliness of the large trash bins in hallways. Kornbluh said FP&M doesn't have the staff to empty the trash from offices.
4. Representative for the Review of the Library System. Policy Committee selected a faculty member to serve as the Senate representative on the committee. Beale will contact to verify willingness.
5. Update re University Response to Student Senate's Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Statement. The Student Senate approved a statement about the conflict, but the administration prevented the statement from being disseminated to the student body via the Student Senate listserv, saying it was "inflammatory." The administration has now prevented the students from using the listserv for any communication without approval of the Dean of Students. PC members believe students should be able to communicate with their

constituents via a university listserv and consider this an academic freedom, since restrictions on students could arguably be expanded to include the Academic Senate as well. The group will continue to work for a resolution.

6. Canvas. A faculty member complained about the functioning of the Canvas system, in particular the way it displays answers for quizzes. The university has no control of the tweaks Canvas makes and cannot create bolt-ons to address problems such as the display of quiz answers in part because those tweaks are so frequent. Fitzgibbon said that it is critical that the university have policy protocols governing the use of Canvas.
7. Grading Subcommittee Report. Policy Committee received a report from the Curriculum and Instruction Committee Grading Subcommittee regarding the pass/no pass grading system instituted for the winter term and continued through the end of the 2020-2021 academic year.
8. Charges for Standing Committees. Beale asked Policy Committee members to suggest issues that the committees should address this academic year. Charges to committees will be an agenda item at the September 20 meeting.
9. Use of endowments. Members asked about the disbursement of endowments to support students. Some have not been spent for years. Kornbluh said that because budgets in the schools and colleges are cut every year, deans are reluctant to spend the money in the endowments. He wants to address the general budget issues to stabilize unit budgets.